

Note: This may be an easier read if you look at the attached photographs first.

14 December 2005

SSG Brandon Traister

Camp Ramadi

The day began at Camp Ramadi in the early morning for me, prepping myself, my team of four soldiers, my squad of twelve soldiers and my platoon of thirty-six soldiers as well as our Bradley Fighting Vehicle for the patrol ahead of us that day. This is what I did every day before a patrol so this day was no different. Our mission start times always varied and were never the same. Sometimes our missions were during the day and sometimes at night.

We had our mission briefing in the sand parking lot outside of our barracks behind our Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Following the briefing my team and I then hopped into our Bradley. Before we left the front gate to Camp Ramadi I would lead in prayer inside the Bradley. It was dark, noisy and very shaky inside of a Bradley. We would have to wait for the Bradley to come to a stop at the front gate so we could hear the prayer. I can't remember the prayer exactly or in it's entirety but it usually went something like this: "Dear Lord, protect all of our soldiers, sailor, airman, marines and all coalition forces. Give us the strength to do our job to the best of our ability. In the Lord's name we pray, amen."

Following the "amen" in the prayer we would "lock and load" our weapons. The ride usually took us twenty or so minutes from Camp Ramadi, traveling east bound on Route 1, a six lane highway, three east bound and three west bound lanes. The east bound lane heads next to Fallujah (about 20 miles) and then to Baghdad (about 70 miles). The west bound lane heads next to the Syrian Border through all open desert (about 300 miles).

The Cross-Over

We pulled off the south side of Route 1 onto the dirt. Always at a different area never at the same point. The four Bradley's in our convoy scanned the area we were about to dismount for IEDs and snipers and shut down traffic on the parallel east/west route just south of Route 1. About a month earlier on 04 November 2005 just after dismounting our Bradleys we had a car speeding at us after we dismounted. After all non-lethal attempts to stop the car failed we had to do as we were trained to do and fire at the car wounding all three passengers, luckily none of the wounds being fatal.

Everything was clear this day. We dismounted our Bradleys and began our infill. This was the worst part of the day for me... crossing the road and then crossing the canal. About a month earlier on 02 November 2005 as we dismounted and started our night patrol I found an IED with our thermal sight. We decided to fall back to our Bradleys and call EOD rather than find a way around the IED. Good thing we did because as we were falling back to our Bradleys a trigger man set off another IED within 20 yards of our dismounts. Had we found a way around the IED we would have walked right into another IED and most likely had taken casualties. A Bradley Gunner spotted the trigger man running away and engaged the trigger man with coaxial machine gun fire from the Bradley. This kill was never confirmed because the trigger man was located on the south side of the canal.

Before sending the entire platoon across the road we would send two soldiers up to check out the road and then crossover point while the rest of the platoon was at a 360 degree security halt. We always proceeded with caution because we knew the potential dangers that lied ahead. Before we started even our very first patrol of Al Jazirah, our Area of Operation (AO), we sent in engineers and EOD to clear these crossover points, which the enemy had planted many IEDs within. There were only so many crossover points into Al Jazirah, which gave our enemy the upper hand, so at almost every crossover point IEDs had been planted. Our engineers and EOD did their best to find and disarm these IEDs. The problem was that we did not watch these crossover points twenty-four hours a day so each time we had a patrol we knew that there was most likely IEDs planted again underneath these crossover points. Shortly after 14 December 2005 we started to watch these crossover points twenty-four hours a day.

Northern Ramadi, know as Al Jazirah to the local population, translated meant "The Island." And it was an Island, but not a typical island. This island was surrounded by canals and running up from the Euphrates River. These canals were about 10+ feet in width and about 6 or so feet in depth. This area of Ramadi was mostly farm land. The farmers in this area had designed canals running up from the Euphrates to keep their entire field of crops watered. The water flow of each canal was controlled by "shed" sized pump stations located on the northern bank of the Euphrates River. This created the need for bridges and pipes over these canals. This meant that there were only so many places you could cross over these canals and from a tactical view this created "choke points." Choke points were points, such as bridges, where the enemy knew that we would be funneled through so this gave our enemy the upper hand.

As the first two soldiers, SPC Ray Knight and SPC Tom White, crossed over the dirt bridge into Al Jazirah this day they spotted an IED and wire. After pushing forward and setting up security they called back to me to let me know. I decided to send the rest of the platoon west to find another cross over point and I decided that since they were my men and alone on the other side I ran across the cross over to join SPC Knight and SPC White knowing full well I would be jumping over an IED as I crossed. So needless to say I ran as fast as I could across. I took Air Force K9 Handler Sergeant Moses across with me. Knowing that we would have to run as fast as we could possibly run, I challenged Sergeant Moses to a race across.

The Patrol Begins

SPC Knight, SPC White, SGT Moses and I started to make our way through an orange grove. I found the tail of a rocket laying out in the open in this orange grove. The rocket was very old and rusty. This was not the explosive part of the rocket, just the tail end of it. SPC Knight, SPC White and I waited at the edge of an orange grove for the rest of the platoon to find another cross over point. While we waited for the rest of the platoon at the foot of this orange grove we spotted three MAM (Military Aged Males) about 400 meters to our south. They appeared to be watching the cross over with binoculars. I had SPC Knight, my grenadier, shoot a flare round to let them know that we could see them watching us and to provide some smoke cover so they could not see the cross over. The flare round started a fire in the north/south causeway reeds to our southeast about 150 meters from our position. Lucky for us this fire eventually cooked off another IED waiting for us and the north/west dirt road. The military aged males quickly scattered out of sight after the IED cooked off.

We would never roll our Bradleys down these north/south dirt roads. They would wait for us between route 1 and the parallel east/west paved road to the south of route 1, the same area where we dismounted. On 18 September 2005 in the same area of operation one of our Bradleys was rolling down a similar north/south dirt road and struck an IED on the driver side. The driver, SPC William Evans, lost his legs and was medically evacuated to Baghdad, where he died a day later on 19 September 2005. Following that day SPC Evan's Bradley commander, took himself off duty and remained on base behind a radio the rest of the deployment. Following that day we never rolled down these dirt roads unless we had to medically evacuate a soldier.

The rest of the platoon found a cross over point about 200 meters to the west. They had to tight-rope a sewer pipe to cross over the canal. Marine K9 Handler CPL Allen Swartwoudt balance was off this day and he fell and ended up to his waits in the water. At the same time Marine EOD at Camp Ramadi had been notified of the IED location and started there movement with QRF (Quick Reaction Force, also know as EOD Security Team) towards our Bradleys out in sector. We hooked up with the rest of the platoon in the orange grove. I let my platoon leader, 1Lt. Scott Williamson know that I found the tail of a rocket in the orange grove and that there could possibly be a cache located in the area. Lt. Williamson reported this to EOD.

We continued our patrol to the southwest of where we crossed over. The patrols were always planned out with myself and Lt. Williamson the night before. I was always lead navigator using my GPS to guide the platoon through the dense vegetation of Al Jazirah. We came to a group of two homes. The first home was cleared. No MAM (Military Aged Men) home as usual. We would usually only come across children, women, and old retired men. The men were usually out "working" somewhere. We went to the roof of the second house and found shell casing from an AK-47 rifle. We questioned the family and they said they were a part of the local friendly militia (almost like a neighborhood watch with weapons).

Back to the Cross Over

By this time Marine EOD had reported to us that they found the IED and disarmed it and were waiting for us at the crossover for the rocket tail I had found. So I with Lt. Williamson and his radioman SPC George Logue started back towards the crossover while two teams held the rooftops of the two homes we had cleared. SGT Brian Packer, SPC Mario Noviello, SPC Ray Knight and SPC Tom White headed towards the area where we earlier had spotted the men that were overwatching the cross over. SGT Packer's team provided security to south and our Bradley and its commander SSG Kwan Martin, provided security to the north.

After clearing the cross over SSG Pospisil and his EOD team waited for us by our Bradley and were talking with SSG Martin, our Bradley Commander. SSG Pospisil was intrigued by the weapon that SSG Martin was carrying, a port firing weapon. This weapon was designed to screw into the inside of the back gate of the Bradley. This weapon had no butt stock and had threads by the barrel so it was very unique looking and only known to units that had Bradleys. SSG Pospisil asked SSG Martin to take a photograph of him holding the port firing weapon.

I had left the rocket in the orange grove and went back with Lt. Williamson and SPC Logue to retrieve it and to bring it to EOD at the cross over where the day had began. Lt. Williamson had SPC Logue radio EOD that we had arrived at the cross over and we had the tail of the rocket for them. EOD said the cross over had been cleared and that they would meet us at the cross over point. I handed Lt. Williamson my rifle so that I could throw the rocket across the cross over. It was heavy and I didn't have much range of motion with the vest I was wearing but still decided it would be safer if I threw it rather than handed it over at the cross over, which I knew was possibly still being watched by the enemy and could still possibly have IEDs. I took the rocket and threw it across the cross over on the side of the canal. The cross over was elevated and could be seen from far way. The canal was below the cross over and out of sight. S/SGT Pospisil climbed down the side of cross over beside the canal to get it. He grabbed the rocket tail and started to climb up the steep side of the waterway with his knife. At this point I turned around and started back towards Lt. Williamson and SPC Logue waiting for me at the edge of the orange grove.

Explosion and Firefight

Boom... I was knocked on my face and then rolled down the side of the raised road. My ears were ringing and lost hearing momentarily. I turned around and saw nothing but dust in the air and that SSG Pospisil was no longer standing where I last saw him. At the same time of the blast SGT Packer's team was fired on by three Military Aged Males from about 300 meters to their south. They took cover in a palm grove and returned fire and held their position. I remember well hearing the concussion from SPC Noviello's and SPC Knight's M203, a 40mm grenade launcher. The fire fight didn't last too long as the three MAMs quickly retreated to the south.

Still in the prone from being knocked over I started hearing the EOD team yelling, "Pops." I got up off the ground and ran over to Lt. Williamson by the orange grove where he assisted me in taking off my CLS (Combat Lifesaver) Pack. I crossed the road and ran towards where I last saw S/SGT Pospisil. I remember thinking another IED was going to go off as I crossed the road. I was the first to go to the position where we had last saw S/SGT Pospisil. I jumped right into the dirt where the IED had just exploded.

Searching for SSG Pospisil

Where he was standing the most likely area the blast would have thrown him into would have been the canal he was standing next to. I jumped into the water and started searching the bottom of the canal screaming "Pops" as I searched. The water was freezing, the reeds sticking out of the water and been knocked over by the blast and were now almost in a horizontal position parallel of the water in the canal. The reeds grew densely together and were very thick and tough to navigate through. The first thing I found was burning hot pieces of shrapnel. With all the gear I had on I couldn't move through the water and the reeds very fast. I searched the bottom of the canal until I heard his EOD team scream that they found him. I couldn't get out of the water with all my gear on so had to be pulled out of the water by SPC Logue. I remember talking to my 1SG later that night and him reminding me about all of the soldiers that were killed by drowning in similar situations.

As I was searching the water his EOD team was searching the bank along the canal. After a couple minutes, I heard "He's over here." I let them know that I was on my way with my CLS bag. One of his EOD team then said, "We don't need a medic, we need a fucking body bag." After SPC Logue pulled me out of the water I ran over to his body thinking he wasn't dead and that I could help. I first saw his body lying on the side of the bank. Everything was in tact. I then saw his helmet was missing and quickly saw why. The blast had taken the top of his head off. I stood there and stared at him for a couple seconds, but seem to last for a couple minutes. The image, though not clear, is burned into my memory forever.

As we were searching for SSG Pospisil, Camp Ramadi had immediately been notified that an IED had gone off and there were most likely casualties so a medic track was on the way. Right after we found SSG Pospisil's body the medic track had arrived. So that's how long it took to find his body. SSG Pospisil was quickly loaded into the medic track.

The day was not over...

The day was not over. The rest of the platoon holding positions in the two homes we had cleared starting making there way towards us once they heard the firing. They took up position in the orange grove. I left S/SGT Pospisil's body and made my way back towards the cross over. I got my M4 rifle back from Lt. Williamson and we headed into the orange grove for cover.

Our medic SGT Cottrell was asking me about the casualty. I said that I know I am not a doctor and can't pronounce anyone dead, but he's dead. At the North end of the orange grove where it met the road someone said that they saw a wire. One of S/SGT Pospisil's team without hesitation found the wire and cut it with his knife immediately as he was telling everyone to fall back. That was one of the bravest things I saw the entire deployment.

We then moved to the south end of the orange grove and took up defensive positions in a nearby ditch in between the palm grove and the orange grove. By this time we linked back up with SGT Packers team. I remember SPC Knight & SPC Noviello seeing that I was all soaked and asking me about what happened. I remember telling them that our Marine EOD tech was just killed by an IED. We were contacted by Camp Ramadi saying that the aircraft flying above us had spotted a group of military aged males in our vicinity moving towards us and they were sending in two Marine Cobras for support. We marked our position with smoke to identify as friendly.

On 02 November 2005 a Marine Cobra Helicopter had been shot down in our area of operation killing the crew of the two marines piloting the cobra, Major Gerald Bloomfield and Captain Michael Martino. The QRF (Quick Reaction Force) vehicle that went to rescue the two pilots was struck by an IED killing Lieutenant Mark Procopio. So these two Marine Cobras knew of the dangers of our area of operation and so did we.

SGT Packer moving his team back towards the orange grove found a small cache using SPC Noviello who was armed with a metal detector. By this time the engineer platoon of our company that was on QRF arrived and took up position with us between the orange grove and the palm grove. I remember being soaked from head to toe and someone from the engineer platoon taking a photo of me. I don't know who took it but I wish someday I could have that photo.

By this time the sun was setting and it was getting dark fast. It was December, hot during the day and very cold at night. The cold sticks out in my mind much more than the heat. Lt. Williamson, knowing what I just went through, asked me if I wanted to go back to Camp Ramadi with the engineer platoon who would shortly be departing, but I said I wanted to stay. We then moved to the south end of the orange grove and held our position until night fall. I was freezing, shaking, and shivering. We sat there for a while accomplishing nothing.

Moving back to Camp Ramadi

We finally made our way back towards our Bradleys. We had to cross over the same sewer pipe where the rest of the platoon crossed earlier that day. We mounted up in our Bradleys and headed back to Camp Ramadi. As soon as I got off the Bradley I went straight to the shower trailer with all my gear and just sat in the warm water of the shower by myself for about a half hour. Lt. Williamson came and got me and told me that he and I and SPC Logue had to go to the Battalion Aid Station for a post IED evaluation.

Before we headed over 1SG Larue Stelene and CPT Louis Gansell were waiting to meet with me to get my story about what happened. I guess they had heard what happened and they asked me if I was OK and what happened and I told them. I got changed and then headed over to the medical station with Lt. Williamson and SPC Logue. I did not want to go but was made to go. We were all given brief exams and all cleared at the battalion aid station. I remember that at the medic station they checked out SPC Logue first. The medic looked into his ears and thought he saw blood, but then corrected himself. SPC Logue's ears were just dirty. The next day I had to go to my supply sergeant and do a sworn statement for the GPS I lost in the canal and the Video Camera that I had on me that was damaged by the water in the canal. My personal digital camera also was damaged when I jumped in the canal from the water.

Guilt and Regret

I immediately felt guilty for what happened to SSG Pospisil's, even before we knew that he was dead. If I hadn't found that rocket tail and called it up EOD would have been gone. If I hadn't thrown the rocket tail where I had thrown it SSG Pospisil would most likely still be alive. Since that day I would probably have to say I think about it everyday. If it wasn't for me SSG Pospisil would be retired and fishing on a lake in Minnesota right now.

I regret not advancing toward where we had saw the military aged males watching us that day. This happened to us a lot. We would take contact and just sit still, not advance towards the contact. On 15 December 2005 we did receive a report from another platoon that they had found one enemy casualty in the area most likely from our firefight on the previous day.

Following his death I searched the internet everyday for articles about SSG Pospisil. I was so impressed by the work he did with the bent prop project, a civilian group that would investigate and recover WWII crash sites. My hobby before joining the service was interviewing WWII veterans. That was why I joined the service, inspired by all the veterans I had interviewed. So I felt even worse after reading about all he had done in his career as a Marine and how close to retirement he was and how all he wanted to do was enjoy retirement and go fishing.

SSG Pospisil was the second EOD technician I had worked with that was near retirement and killed while doing his job. The first was G/SGT Darrell Boatman when I was stationed at Camp Habbaniyah over a month and a half earlier. The EOD technicians were the bravest men I had ever met in my life.

Theories of what happen and why it happened

Talking with G/SGT Michael Burghardt at the EOD building on Camp Ramadi he told me that he believes that SSG Pospisil hit a pressure plate with his knife when he was climbing up the side of the crossover. I believed that the IED, which killed SSG Pospisil, was set off by the Military Aged Males we had saw earlier that day and that fired on SGT Packer's team right after the explosion.

On 13 December 2005, the day before the explosion our platoon had detained by luck, five high value targets that happened to be visiting our AO that evening. They rolled up in two cars and didn't see that we were currently located in the house next door. By the time they saw us they tried to quickly turn around and speed away but we fired warning shots into the dirt and the cars did the smart thing and stopped. We went next door and checked their ID and called it up to Camp Ramadi, who confirmed that they were high value targets that needed to be detained. I feel that the military aged males that fired on us most likely had a link to the men we had detained on the previous day.

Memorial Services

I can't remember what day SSG Pospisil's memorial service was on at Camp Ramadi. I was woken one morning by Marine CPL Allen Swartwoudt. He came to tell me that S/SGT Pospisil's memorial service was today and was going to be held in an hour. I attended the SSG Pospisil's memorial services with SGT Adam Cann, CPL Brendan Poelaert and CPL Allen Swartwoudt, the three Marine K9 handlers I had been working with daily, who were also out with my platoon the day he was killed. It was held right where Marine ANGLICO, EOD and K9 lived, right where SSG Pospisil had lived. G/SGT Michael Burghardt was the main speaker.

G/SGT Michael Burghardt had become the most well known Marine in the entire area between Ramadi and Fallujah. Back on 19 September 2005 he was in the process of disarming an IED out in sector when the IED went off throwing him to the ground. The QRF that was with him thought he was dead but then found him and that he was alive and still had all his appendages. As they were patching him up a photographer took a photograph of him and the image and story, which was originally published in the Omaha Herald, quickly circled the internet. His own mother didn't even know he was a bomb technician until she found out he was injured.

This was the third memorial service I has attended at Camp Ramadi. I attended one for G/SGT Darrell Boatman, an EOD tech I worked with at Camp Habbaniyah. This service was run by G/SGT Michael Burghardt in the chapel on Camp Ramadi, I attended and was also on the firing squad for SPC William Evans and for the five soldiers from my company (SSG George Pugliese, SSG Daniel Arnold, SGT Eric Slebodnik, SPC Lee Wiegand, SPC Oliver Brown) that were all killed when there Bradley struck an IED at a railroad crossing in the Tammin district of Ramadi on 28 Sept 2005.

Overall my company of about 90 or so soldiers had seven Killed in Action and three of the Marines we worked with Killed in Action for a total of 10 Killed in Action. We had about twice that number of our soldier Wounded in Action. Our company had the highest casualty rate in the Brigade of about 3,000 soldiers.

Twenty-Four-Seven Operation

After 14 December 2005 I became more cautious and thought about death more. The week following SSG Pospisil's death I put a lot of thought into how to make the cross over part of the patrol safer. One day we actually tried putting long wooden planks we got from the lumbar yard at Camp Ramadi on top of our Bradleys, and then we took them down and carried them to the canal hoping they would be long enough to cross over the canal, but they weren't.

It took about a week or so but then we finally started to watch the crossovers twenty-four hours a day. So about a week later we started our twenty-four hour operations in the area. My squad had the over night shift, which really screwed up our sleeping. It takes a while to adjust. Our K9 section was needed for an Iraqi Army and Police recruiting drive being held at the back gate of Camp Ramadi so they stopped patrolling with us.

Losing another friend

I called over to Marine K9 early in the morning 05 January 2006 to talk to SGT Cann and tell him we needed him and his team for our upcoming patrols. SGT Moses answered the phone. I asked for SGT Cann and he said that he was going to come by our barracks. SGT Moses came by and broke the news to me that SGT Cann was killed earlier that morning by a suicide bomber.

From 02 January 2006 to 05 January 2006 Camp Ramadi was holding an Iraqi police and army recruiting drive at the back gate of Camp Ramadi next to a closed down factory known as the "Glass Factory." This factory before the war manufacturer plastic soda sized bottles. It was huge and dark and was a known insurgent safe haven.

A rumor I heard was that we had intelligence prior to 05 January 2006 that a suicide bomber would be targeting this recruiting drive and that we didn't take the necessary precautions to prevent this from happening. I don't know how true this is but I hope it is not true. And looking at photos from that day it looked like it wasn't organized that well and security wasn't setup properly.

It worked out that my leave would be around the same time as Adam's memorial services at Arlington National Cemetery. I contacted the newspaper down in Florida who had done a story on Adam's father following Adam's death, the Miami Herald. I asked the writer of the story, Diana Moskovitz, for Leigh Cann's (Adam's father) contact info so that I could ask his father if I could attend his memorial services. He gave me his father's contact information and I was able to get in touch with Leigh and attend his services at Arlington.

Medically Evacuated

When I returned back to Camp Ramadi in late January 2006 I had learned that SPC George Logue had become very sick and had to be medically evacuated to a hospital in Germany for treatment. They felt that it was due to the concussion he had received on 14 December 2005. This surprised me because he was standing next to Lt. Williamson and Lt. Williamson was fine. Neither of those two was as close as I was to the blast and I was fine.

SPC Logue was diagnosed with PCS or Post Concussion Syndrome. This ends a lot of NFL and NHL Players careers as well as many boxers careers. This causes dizziness, nausea, vomiting and headaches, all of which SPC Logue was experiencing.

Gaining another friend

In early February our company moved from Camp Ramadi to Camp Blue Diamond, a small Marine Corps base in Ramadi. One of the first things I did was look for Marine K9. I walked around post asking where Marine K9 was located. I eventually found it. When I arrived at Marine K9 I introduced myself to SGT Noah Evermann. G/SGT Anthony Smit was there and remembered Adam introducing me to him back in December; I invited SGT Evermann to come out on patrol with us as I did with SGT Cann. He was happy to be going out on patrol and we quickly became friends.

Going Home

I left the country in April of 2006 and was discharged from active duty service in May 2006 and placed back into the reserves. When I returned home all that I wanted to do all day long was just be at home and not do anything else. I tried going back to school and going back to my old caddying job but neither of those lasted that long. I had too much anxiety and didn't feel comfortable. The only way I could relax and feel comfortable when I first got home was through drinking alcohol. It took me few months to be able relax.

I did find a sanctuary playing football. I tried out for a semi-pro football team when I got home and made the team and eventually became a starter, then defensive captain, then all-star. I think I had a lot of built up aggression and that's why I did so well my first year of playing semi-pro football. I was also in somewhat decent shape from doing foot patrols everyday and night while I was in Iraq.

I visited Williamsport, PA in December 2006 to visit the Army guys I served with in Iraq. We all got a tattoo together on the inside of our right bicep. We didn't really talk much about what happened while we were overseas. I have since lost touch of most of the guys I had served with; many of them are currently serving in Afghanistan and many of whom are headed back to Iraq this fall.

My wife Alicia and I had our first child on June 14, 2007. It didn't take long for me to come up with a name for our son. We named our son Adam Blake Traister in honor of Kenneth Blake Pospisil and Adam Leigh Cann. I was supposed to get out of the service in May 2008 but I am being stop-lossed and heading back to Iraq again. So my story isn't over yet.

14 December 2005
Photographs and Maps



The photo on the left is taken when EOD came out to recover a cache that we had found on 16 November 2005. The spool of wire is for a piece of ordnance that couldn't be recovered that EOD is about to detonate. They let one of my soldiers press the detonator as a birthday present. The photograph on the right is EOD setting fire to a hay pile with multiple IEDs hidden within. These IEDs couldn't be recovered so EOD decided to just cook them off. We walked past this hay pile for a week straight.



This photograph was taken on 13 December 2005 shortly after detaining five high value targets. This is taken inside of the home where we detained the targets. I'm on the left and Marine K9 handler SGT Adam Leigh Cann is on the right. This was home was not from where S/SGT Pospisil was killed.



This is Camp Ramadi, Iraq. This image is taken off of Google Earth. The building above marked "EOD" is where Pops lived with the rest of the EOD as well as the Military Working Dog Handlers and ANGLICO (Marine forward observers).



This is the building noted in the above map as "where I slept." This is where the day began and ended. Out in the parking lot are our Bradley Fighting Vehicles. The white building to the right was the chow hall and to the right of the chow hall is where Pops lived.



During a mission brief joined by Marine ANGLICO, EOD & K9.



Inside the Bradley could fit six dismounts comfortably in the back with a crew of three in the front. From left to right, Private Parmarter, Private Bellows and Corporal Brewer.



The front gate to Camp Ramadi looking out towards Route 1



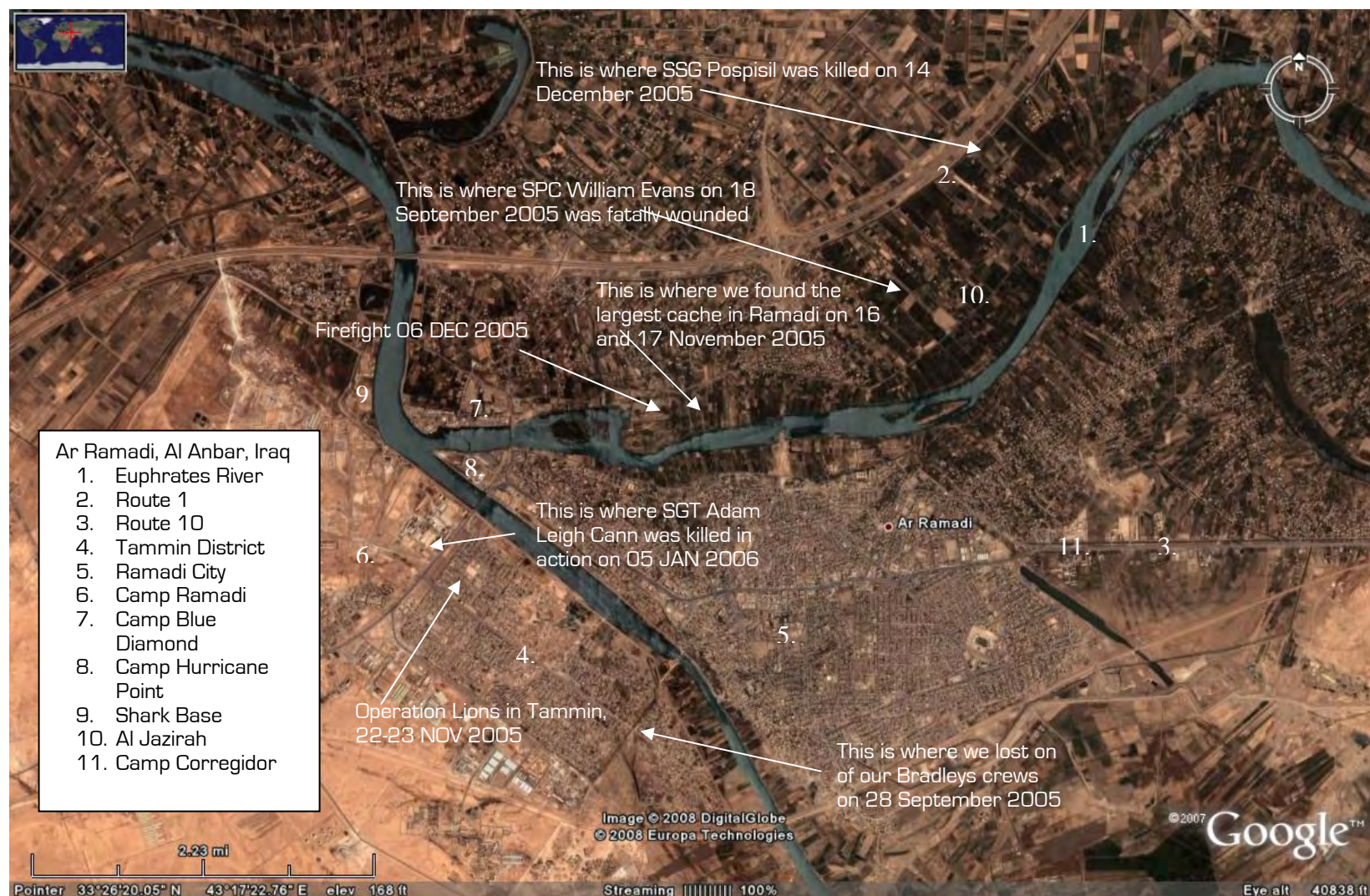
Our convoy of Bradleys heading east on Route 1



04 November 2005. Here is the vehicle we had shot up after failing to stop as it sped towards us. In the background are our Bradleys... this is where they would park and wait for us while we were out on patrol. This is where our foot patrols started and ended.



This time of the year (winter) was car bomb season in the area so we were told to carry AT-4 rocket launchers I am at the top right. On my back is my GLS kit.



Here is Ramadi Area of Operation viewed from 40,000 feet above the Earth's surface.

Order of Battle of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Marine Division for the Ramadi Area of Operation from June 2005 to June 2006:

- The U.S. Marine Corp 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (California) patrolled Ramadi City out of Camp Hurricane Point.
- The U.S. Army 69th Armored Regiment (Georgia) patrolled Route 10 out of Camp Corregidor.
- The U.S. Army 109th Infantry Regiment (Pennsylvania) patrolled Al Jazirah out of Camp Blue Diamond.
- The U.S. Army 172nd Armored Regiment (Vermont) patrolled the Tammin District out of Camp Ramadi.
- The U.S. Navy Seals patrolled the area north of Route 1 and the Euphrates River out of Shark Base.



This is the cross over point where the day began and the day ended. This is taken from the point of view of our Bradley.



This is the southern tip of the orange grove facing towards the south where we held until linking up with the rest of the platoon.



It was common for us to find old and rusty ordnance lying out in the open in the middle of a palm grove or orange grove.



On the left hand side of this photograph you can see how we would cross over the canal using a pipe not much wider than our shoulder width. On a couple occasions we had soldier fall six or so feet into the water below. This is Marine K9 Handler CPL Allen Swartwoudt and his German Sheppard "Allen." The soldier crossing the pipe is former Marine SGT Michael Orwig, a twenty-year veteran of the Williamsport (PA) Police Department.



Marines K9 Handlers SGT Adam Leigh Cann (Left), CPL Brendan Poelaert (Right) and MWD Flapper on top of the roof where we found the shell casings on 14 December 2005. SGT Cann was killed in action two weeks later on 05 January 2006 and CPL Poelaert was wounded in action on that same day.



Here is the map of the area we operated in on 14 December 2005.



This is a close up of the cross over where SSG Pospisil was killed.



The canals are cold and deep and can't be walked across. In the distance you can see a pipe across the canal. This is how we would sometimes cross over.



This is the area where S/SGT Pospisil's body was found. Grenadier SPC Raymond Knight pictured above.

14 December 2005 - Photographs and Maps

HEALTH RECORD		CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF MEDICAL CARE																					
DATE	SYMPTOMS, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, TREATING ORGANIZATION (Sign each entry)																						
DATE 14 Dec 05	S- 23 y/o male presents post IED blast. Pt says he																						
TIME 2137	was 15 meters away from blast from front, Pt was																						
BP 127/82	wearing hearing protection in one ear. Pt says he																						
P 98	is in general good health, normal aches and pains																						
R 14	from wearing gear.																						
T	O- TMs intact																						
SPO2 98%	P&RMA fine																						
	- Full ROM in neck																						
ALLERGIES	- No rigidity in abdominal area																						
N/A	- normal breath sounds																						
MEDICATIONS	P - Post IED blast																						
	P Rest on relaxation																						
PMHX																							
5 12 1806	<p style="text-align: center;"> <i>sm. to 91010</i> <i>Reviewed by Andrew A. Robinson</i> <i>1LT, PA-C</i> </p>																						
PSHX																							
FMHX																							
ETOH USE																							
TOBACCO USE																							
<p>PATIENT'S IDENTIFICATION (Use this space for Mechanical Injuries)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">RECORDS MAINTAINED AT: I-172 AR BN AID STATION</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PATIENT'S NAME (Last, First, Middle initial)</td> <td>SEX</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Truster Brandon C</td> <td>M</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RELATIONSHIP TO SPONSOR</td> <td>RANK/GRADE</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>E-5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SPONSOR'S NAME</td> <td>ORGANIZATION</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>B Co 1/09</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DEPART./SERVICE</td> <td>DATE OF BIRTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SSN/IDENTIFICATION NO</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>141-84-3272</td> <td>07 Jan 82</td> </tr> </table>				RECORDS MAINTAINED AT: I-172 AR BN AID STATION		PATIENT'S NAME (Last, First, Middle initial)	SEX	Truster Brandon C	M	RELATIONSHIP TO SPONSOR	RANK/GRADE		E-5	SPONSOR'S NAME	ORGANIZATION		B Co 1/09	DEPART./SERVICE	DATE OF BIRTH	SSN/IDENTIFICATION NO		141-84-3272	07 Jan 82
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CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF MEDICAL CARE

STANDARD FORM 600 (REV. 5-84)
Prescribed by GSA and ICMR
FIRM (41 CFR) 201-45.505
RCAS V1.0

Here is a copy of my post injury evaluation I had at the battalion aid station on 14 December 2005.



The image of G/SGT Michael Burghardt from the Omaha World Herald that is now all over the internet. G/SGT Michael Burghardt ran the memorial services for G/SGT Darrell Boatman and S/SGT Pospisil.



Myself and G/SGT Darrell Boatman a couple weeks before he was killed at Camp Habbaniyah



In Memory Of
Staff Sergeant Kenneth Pospisil
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company
2nd Force Service Support Group
14 December 2005
Rest in Peace, Warrior

This photograph above was taken minutes before he died. The weapon he is holding is a Bradley Fighting Vehicles port firing weapon. This photo was taken from the back of our Bradley Fighting Vehicle as S/SGT Pospisil was waiting for us at the cross over. This photo was taken by Bradley Commander SSG Kwan Martin.



The Glass Factory just outside the back gate of Camp Ramadi where on 05 January 2006, SGT Adam Leigh Cann, USMC was killed, LTC Michael McLaughlin, U.S. Army was killed and CPL Brendan Poelaert, USMC was wounded during an Iraqi Army and Police recruiting drive



The photograph was taken minutes before SGT Adam Cann's death. This is the back gate of Camp Ramadi, where SGT Adam Cann died. Lieutenant Colonel Michael McLaughlin who was standing nearby was also killed. CPL Brendan Poelaert was also wounded.



This photo was taken at the same location a couple days earlier. This photo was also used in USA Today.



This photograph was posted on the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's website and is hanging on the wall at Camp Ramadi's Memorial Wall. The monuments to the top left was moved from Camp Ramadi, Iraq and now is at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania



Playing semi-pro football in 2006 was my outlet. I am # 25 on the right hand side. My friend #5 Jeffrey Braxton was murdered in early 2007 in gang violence in Burlington, NJ.



February 2007 – K9 section of Camp Fallujah, Iraq is named Camp Cann in honor of SGT Adam Leigh Cann.



Adam Blake Traister born on June 14, 2007 (Flag Day) at 7:53PM in Mount Holly, New Jersey, 8 Pounds, 3 Ounces



January 1, 2008 - For the third year in a row I spent a day in January at Arlington National Cemetery visit the resting place of my friend Adam Leigh Cann.